9:Howell E-5 (1937-1950) 1952 FJ23 Shilluk FJ23

that the most definite contrasts may be found. Whether this established and institutionalized monarchy is the result of diffusion from elsewhere, a legacy from ancient Egypt,[1] or the result of spontaneous development from the politico-religious functionaries who exist in embryo form among other Shilluk-speaking[2] and, indeed, other Nilotic peoples, is a controversial subject which I do not propose to discuss here.

Territorially, Shilluk country is divided into two provinces, within which are the northern and southern provinces of Muomo and Tung, eleven divisions, and finally each division into a number of settlements which are referred to as *padh*.[3] The settlement is the largest political unit which has a permanent and stable function in Shilluk society today.[4] The members occupy a common and clearly defined territory, have a common grazing and fishing area held collectively, a common name, and a common system of age-set nomenclature.[5] Within each settlement are a number of villages or hamlets, each of which, with its offshoots, is occupied by a distinct kinship group, the local lineage of one of the main Shilluk clans. One of these lineages is usually dominant and, though it does not give its name to the settlement, its leader is generally recognized as holding some authority over the rest of the community. In each settlement there are also usually representative lineages of *kwareth* who sometimes, but not always, have assumed a position of dominance within that settlement, usually by force of numbers. There are also *bang reth* living in close association with *kwareth* or tending one or more of the numerous royal shrines.[6]

There are frequent movements and migrations, both of individuals and of small domestic groups. The persons who thus take up residence in other parts of the country retain links with kinsmen in their original home and these links continue for a period. The number of generations which pass before they are forgotten is indeterminate and variable, but the factor of territorial association is an important one. Lineages of one clan living in one area are likely to retain these links and remain bound by rules of exogamy however far removed they may be in the kinship structure. Moreover, common residence in one village area or even one settlement may create bonds which are equal in strength to kinship ties and may even carry with it a bar to intermarriage. In such circumstances there is usually the fiction of common descent through the female line. Among the Shilluk there is a bar to marriage with close relatives on the maternal side carried to three or four generations, but common residence sometimes creates a more permanent prohibition.

[1] See Seligman, C. G., *Egypt and Negro Africa*. George Routledge & Sons, 1934, p. 60.

[2] For example, the Anuak nobles; see Evans-Pritchard, *The Political System of the Anuak of the Anglo-Egyptian Sudan*. Monographs on Social Anthropology, London School of Economics. 1940; and Driberg, J. H., *The Lango*.

[3] *padh*. A more elastic and relative term than I had realized when writing an article on this subject in 1937. *padh* simply means 'home' or 'homeland' and Shilluk refer to *padh collo*: 'Shillukland'. The word itself has the same relativity as the Nuer word *cieng* and the Dinka word *wut*.

[4] There have, of course, been changes of boundaries and processes of fission and fusion characteristic of any segmentary society. The nature of the terrain in Shilluk country, however, precludes any great change. The limitations of high ground, with clear-cut watercourses as boundaries, together with associated economic interests, tend to stabilize communities.

[5] This is a significant fact and one which throws much light on the true nature of the Shilluk *padh*. When we compare other Nilotic tribes we find that age-set nomenclature is common to whole tribes, but does not extend beyond tribal boundaries (Nuer) or, like the Shilluk, is limited to smaller segments of society (Ngork Dinka).

[6] Lineages of the *kwareth* are referred to by the name of the *reth*, *nyireth* (son of a *reth*), or *nyinyireth* (grandson of a *reth*) who founded them. Thus *Kwareth* Fadiet, *Kwanyireth* Adung, &c. Similarly, *bang reth* are distinguished as *bang reth* Fadiet, *bang nyireth* Adung, &c.

chief and by their special relations with the lineage which holds authority over them. Thus there are social, political and economic influences backed by common residence which promote unity and emotional security, and patterns of behaviour arise entirely distinct from those which characterise the kinship group.

The balance of loyalty to settlement or to kin is difficult to define. The lineage resident in one locality is clearly the most significant unit of society. Blood relationship is closer and co-operation is intensified by daily contact and mutual interests. All the factors which make for peace and mutual help in the settlement are not sufficient to break the ties which unite the local lineage. Loyalty, obligations and observances are greater towards a blood relative who is also a neighbour than towards an individual who is a neighbour only. The corporate unity of the lineage is kept alive by kinship which is a biological fact and the observance of exogamy and all the complicated obligations raised in marriage do not allow the Shilluk to forget. The extended clan, however, in which relationship may be so remote as to be fictitious, is not cemented together by lasting and mutual interests, nor are old associations renewed by periodic reunion. Even so, the traditions of the clan are to some extent maintained and the rule of exogamy is not broken however scattered its members

The Shilluk settlement consists of a number of hamlets *Myer*, (*Pl of Pac*,) each occupied by a lineage. The settlement has a varying number of distinct lineages resident therein, but each hamlet is exclusively occupied by a kinship group. Each hamlet is a separate cluster of huts which are built along the high ground parallel to the river bank. The distance between each varies from a hundred yards to a mile or so. The hamlet is not constant in the number of its huts and grows or diminishes in size according to the increase or decrease in numbers of the lineage which occupies it. Mr. Pumphrey has explained that off-shoots from hamlets are continually being initiated by enterprising young Shilluk who, having married, wish to build a home for themselves away from the parent hamlet. Sometimes these off-shoots (*Nyola Myer*) are started in other parts of the country, more usually within the settlement and not far from the birth-place to their founder.

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134 struggling at each step to free oneself from the clinging mud underneath. Long after the rains have ceased the swamp remains, only drying up gradually under the heat of the sun and through drainage into the river, until by mid-December the moisture has all been drawn from the earth, and the bright green grass which has covered it during the rains begins to turn yellow and wither.

797 If my new home was no Eden of beauty, neither was it one free from labour and toil. The territory covered by the mission is, I discovered, quite large. In length it is about 70 miles, extending from Kaka, 55 miles to the north, to a point 15 miles south of Detwok; inland it stretches 15 miles [361] from the river where the Shilluk villages farthest from the river are to be found. The 'parish' thus comprises roughly an area of 1,050 square miles and it is a formidable task for two priests to administer it, especially as the most speedy [493] means of transport available is the push bicycle. However, [771] most of the Christians, who at that time were by no means numerous, lived in the villages near the mission, and large areas were without habitation of any kind, so that the task of parochial visitation did not prove as onerous as it might at first appear. The Shilluk are inveterate wanderers and [166] often drift from the villages in which they were born and baptized as far north as Kaka, or inland to the limits of inhabited country. There they will remain for years quite out of touch with the mission and Christian influence, for rarely if ever do they come in to hear Mass and receive the Sacraments. With all the good will in the world it is impossible for two priests, one with the many affairs of the mission to attend to and the other fully occupied in the school, to keep track of these nomads and follow them in their 763 wanderings. But their heavenly mother, Mary, does not for- 797 get them at the hour of their death, and many is the time that a message from a vigilant catechist, or word brought casually by a passing traveller, or, more often than not, a request for a burial cloth from the pagan relatives of the dying Christian sends the priest post-haste a journey of 15 or 20 miles, in the dry season by bicycle, in the rains on foot, to bring the

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763 sound that is prolonged for about ten minutes and is renewed at intervals during the day as relatives or friends of the deceased arrive for the funeral.

[166] I have said previously that the Shilluk are fond of wandering from their own villages. They will settle and live for years at the other end of the country, perhaps among the people of another tribe or in another province. But no matter how long a man has been away from his own people, he will always endeavour to return to die among them, and if he should fall ill whilst away from home he will try to let his kinsfolk know in order that they may come and fetch him, or will have himself carried back. If, however, he should die 766 away from home the news of his death is greeted with the customary wailing, and some member of his family must visit his grave and bring back some of the earth from it; this is buried near the dead man's home and the funeral ceremonies are enacted over it as though the corpse itself were present.

761 It is the Shilluk tradition that the king should not be 682 permitted to die a natural death, but should be ceremoni- [643] ously smothered by his womenfolk. The same is true of a chief, but whether the reasons for the killing in this case are the same as those which decide the death of the king is not clear. Certainly a chief who had been ill for a month and showed no signs of recovery would be speedily put out of the way. [888] The custom seems to extend to other cases too; an old man would be smothered as also would be one suffering from a long and painful illness, and the same is done too, in some cases at least, shortly before death would take place naturally. I myself saw a dying boy being smothered by his own mother. She propped him up between her knees and passed her hand over his nose and mouth. I thought that she was wiping away the mucus that was coming from his nose and mouth, and it was only when he had ceased to breathe that I realized to my horror that she had killed him. When questioned about the reasons for this 'mercy' killing the Shilluk are vague and evasive. They say, for instance, that it is a humiliation for anyone to die naturally.